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ABSTRACT

This study of pupil control attitudes was based on the assumption that public school teachers and college education instructors hold divergent views on pupil control. These divergent views would then be imposed on the preservice teachers. The Pupil Control Ideology (PCI) Scale and the Dogmatism Scale, Form E, were randomly distributed to 100 teachers from the education department at Queens College, New York and 100 cooperating teachers in the public schools. Each of these groups was divided into early childhood, elementary, and secondary subgroups. Three hypotheses were tested: I-college teachers would register a more humanistic approach to pupil control on the PCI; II-significant differences would appear among similar college and public school subgroups but not among subgroups within the college itself; and III-a positive relationship would be shown between dogmatism and pupil control. Results showed confirmation of Hypotheses I and III; Hypothesis II was not confirmed. (The results of the study are discussed, stressing a need for agreement among college instructors and cooperating teachers on pupil control.) (BRB)

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Pupil Control As an Institutional Pattern

The student who desires to become a teacher generally engages in a program of study that includes professional course work at a college and a period of student teaching in the public schools. The school-university approach is a widely used model in teacher education programs. Perhaps the underlying assumption of this model is that the collaboration of these two institutions provides the most satisfactory means of wedding the practical and the theoretical aspects of teaching. The same specialization of function which makes the merger an attractive one, however, may also provide the kinds of differences that weaken it.

Based on the results of some prior studies of client control, an attempt was made to analyze possible differences in institutional attitudes toward the need to control or discipline students. In previous research, it has been concluded that pupil control is the central thread which runs throughout the organization of the public school. "Sociologists and anthropologists have often employed concepts which are integrative and which portray social systems as unified wholes rather than as fragmented and unrelated parts. We found such an integrative theme in the schools under study: it was clearly that of pupil control."[1]

If college trainers and cooperating teachers are divided in their views on pupil control, the implications for those administering teacher-training programs are rather disquieting since it would appear that elements of the same program may be in conflict with each other on an issue of central importance to teaching. An organizational typology proposed by Carlson was used to support the contention that teacher training personnel from the college and cooperating teachers in the public school do indeed have different conceptions of the need for pupil control.[2]

Conceptual Framework and Rationale

Carlson suggests that one factor influencing the environment of formal, service-type organizations is the manner in which the organization and the consumers of its services come together. The degree of freedom that each exerts in the relationship may have a considerable impact upon the way the institution organizes its human and material resources to provide the service. He proposes that one means of conceptualizing the relationship of a client to a service organization is to examine the extent to which selectivity is an available option for either party. When viewed from this perspective, it is clear that some organizations select their clients while others do not. Similarly, some clients can select or refuse a service, while others (legally) can not. Examples of institutions in which selectivity is practiced by neither the organization nor its clients include prisons, mental hospitals and public schools.

This element of choice or selectivity on the part of client or organization would appear to have profound implications for both institutional behavior patterns and client-staff relations. Organizations, whose clients are unwilling participants in the service that the organization has to offer, may find themselves forced to introduce restraints upon behavior, i.e., a custodial ideology. Staff attitudes toward clients may be strongly influenced by the fact that the latter are not there by choice. This introduces a motivation problem that could cause the staff to apply increasing controls, for the service provided may otherwise be rejected by the client.[3]

Indeed, the model Carlson proposes draws heavily upon previous research conducted in mental hospitals, which supports this supposition.

"The observation that patients are more disciplined than created on back wards is a common one, and is substantiated by almost all observers of mental hospitals. Although there were exceptions, . . . treatment procedures were (often) converted into controls."[4]

Similar examples of goal-displacement have been recorded in research on prisons where the presumed objective of rehabilitation has given way to a custodial emphasis.[5] Client control, which begins as a means to an end, becomes an end in itself. It appears that a custodial ideology may be one of the organizational mechanisms that evolves in institutions dealing with an unselected clientele.

The Proposed Study

In this study, it was conjectured that there were differences in this critical area of client control between college education instructors and public school cooperating teachers. Using the model discussed above, the public school and the college would be viewed as different organizational types. As a result, it was suggested that individuals within the two organizations who are responsible for training teachers may have deep and essential disagreements that are an outcome of the way their organizations are organized to provide services. If individuals are socialized by the systems within which they work, then the college personnel, who are physically removed from the reality of the public school structure and situation, might not see the need for pupil control in quite the same light that the public school teachers do. Indeed some earlier research on pupil control appears to indicate that the degree of contact with the client is closely related to differences in control ideology.[6] It was further believed that control ideology would be significantly different across institutional lines even

when the individuals concerned shared a similar function. That is to say, not only would the college as a whole reflect more humanistic pupil control attitudes than the cooperating teachers, but discreet populations within it (early childhood, elementary, secondary) would exhibit less difference with each other than with their counterparts in the public schools.

The factor of dogmatism was considered in the study because previous studies had indicated that it bore a relationship to pupil control. The need to control clients may be particularly acute in institutions in which selectivity is not practiced. Motivating clients to accept a service over which they have not exercised a choice can be a particularly difficult and status threatening task for staff members. The resolution of this motivation problem through the application of rigid systems of control must be an ever present temptation. It seemed reasonable to expect that closed-minded individuals, whose dogmatic tendencies are heightened by increased threat, would be more prone to adopting a custodial orientation in dealing with these problems.[7] Dogmatism was measured through the use of the D-Scale developed by Rokeach. Pupil control attitudes were measured by the Pupil Control Ideology (PCI) Scale developed by Willower and others at Pennsylvania State University. The latter is a 20 item scale that is used to record a spectrum of attitudes ranging from custodial at one extreme to humanistic at the other.

Procedures and Results

The PCI Scale and the Dogmatism Scale, Form E, were distributed to a randomly selected population of 100 teachers from the education department of Queens College and 100 cooperating teachers in the public

schools. Each of the two groups were further broken down into early childhood, elementary and secondary sub-groups. Using a 2 x 6 nested analysis of variance, the pupil control attitudes of teachers in the college sub-groups were compared to those of their counterparts in the public school population. Employing the same statistic, the PCI of the college group as a whole was compared to that of the total public school population.

In Hypothesis One significant differences had been predicted in the PCI of the college and cooperating teacher groups, with the college displaying more humanistic attitudes. The main effect F ratio was significant at the .05 level in the direction predicted and so the hypothesis was confirmed.

In Hypothesis Two, it had been predicted that there would be differences between similar college and public school sub-groups but not between sub-groups within the college itself. The anticipated differences between sub-groups in the two institutions occurred as expected in the case of the elementary and secondary teaching populations. The difference between the college and public school early childhood did not prove significant, however. As a result this hypothesis was not confirmed.

The third hypothesis was that a positive relationship existed between dogmatism and pupil control attitudes. A Pierson r was employed for this purpose, yielding a correlation coefficient of r = .44. Since this was significant beyond the .05 level of significance which had been set for acceptance, the hypothesis was confirmed.

Implications

The central area of concern in the study was that of pupil control. It is believed that this aspect of education requires much greater examination and that much that happens within the educational institution

is inextricably bound up with the need to control pupils.

The results of Hypothesis One clearly indicate that in this sample, the college teachers tend to express more humanistic pupil control attitudes than the cooperating teachers. This is yet another example of educators who are removed from the actual classroom situation reflecting a less custodial orientation. In the original study made by Willower, principals and guidance counselors also proved to be significantly more humanistic than classroom teachers in their PCI attitudes. It is possible that being out of the classroom erodes one's sense of reality about what is possible within it. It is believed, however, that a more realistic implication of these differences is that the compulsory nature of the pupil-teacher relationship requires a more custodial approach on the part of those who deal directly with children. If educational personnel continue to reflect humanistic attitudes outside of the classroom and custodial ones within it, it could be interpreted as one indication of the demands the structure imposes upon teachers.

It is possible that some of the most acute problems that face classroom teachers are a result of the type of authority they are given and expected to exercise. It is even possible that the broader purposes of education and the specific functions of the teacher are antithetical to compulsory school attendance. Waller apparently recognized this when he suggested that the intrinsic nature of teaching is diametrically opposed to the bureaucratic principle of school organization and that, paradoxically, to fulfill the demands of the role of teacher one is forced to violate the rules of performance.[8]

In Hypothesis Two, PCI differences had been predicted between subgroups when compared across institutional lines but not between college

sub-groups themselves. While the hypothesis as stated was not confirmed in its entirety, the results are still of some interest. First, it is probably important to consider the age of the pupils closely when one is measuring the PCI of teachers. In a non-selective situation where student attendance is coerced, the older child is far more likely to represent a threat to the teacher's status in both real and psychological terms. As the student grows physically and mentally more mature, it is increasingly difficult for teacher to impose restraints upon his or her behavior. Viewed in this manner, it is not surprising that Willower found secondary school teachers the most custodially prone group in the population he studied. The imposition of rigid rules and a tightly organized classroom structure is one means of maintaining control in a potentially volatile situation. Under such circumstances PCI differences between college education instructors and public school teachers are far more likely to occur at the level of the secondary and elementary schools. It is possible that there is much greater congruence in the general views of those responsible for early childhood education in the two different institutions.

Secondly, although the anticipated difference between the college and field early childhood sub-groups did not materialize, this should not obscure the importance of the very real differences between elementary and secondary groups that were noted.

The existence of these differences had been a major supposition in the study. It has been pointed out that the college instructors and co-operating teachers are jointly responsible for the preparation and training of prospective teachers. Differences of view between the two groups are natural and can be beneficial. When the disagreement extends to essential

issues that may exert pervasive and powerful influences, however, the results can be damaging.

Pupil control may be such an issue since it has long been considered central to the teaching art. It would appear certain that educational objectives, methodology and philosophy are affected by the teacher's attitudes toward pupil control. One possible ramification of the college and cooperating teachers having divergent PCI's is that the trainee may be faced with contradictory sets of expectations. The ambiguity and dissonance that may thus be built into the training program can seriously diminish its effectiveness. Under such circumstances it is possible that the better the college trains its students in regard to its goals, the less suited they are to cope with the student teaching environment in which they are later placed. A student thus disillusioned may not soon adopt a similar philosophy again. If so, the results are particularly ironic since the program that the college provides may be the best guarantee that its philosophy will not prevail.

It is possible that a dedication to verbal humanism without translating it into practical application is not only damaging but self-defeating. In addition, it may be that the failure to recognize the very real limitations on humanism posed by the compulsory educational structure has had disastrous results in teacher training at the college. In anthropological terms the Queens College education instructors may be trying to modify the behavior of individuals without accounting for the influence of the cultures within which they live. Such training is not only likely to fail, it may also leave the individual more vulnerable to the sweep of tradition. His training having failed him, the novice teacher is probably more open to the one major alternative available and that is the teaching model that this study indicates is less humanistic.

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